

UNIVERSITY OF PRESOV
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ECONOMICS, MANAGEMENT & BUSINESS 2023

CONTEMPORARY ISSUES, INSIGHTS AND NEW CHALLENGES

Róbert Štefko - Richard Fedorko - Eva Benková (Eds.)



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The effects of Classroom Management Base C.B.T. on the Development of Self-management Skills in Young Children

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Abstract

Research background: Effective classroom management is characterized by the consistent application of classroom procedures and routines that provide clarity about behavioral expectations. Consistency creates order and helps build confidence. Active student participation in educational processes as part of a management strategy contributes to positive classroom behavior.

Purpose of the article: This study examined the effects of an intervention program based on cognitive-behavioral principles on the assimilation of the common semantics of discipline management in the classroom. The intervention program was conducted in the context of discipline and behavior management and general classroom management over one year with thirty 4th grade students in an elementary school.

Methods: The research is action research within a qualitative method. The data was mainly analyzed thematically. This, along with a quantitative measurement of behavior change based on participant reports.

Findings & Value added: The results show that the application of the cognitive behavioral principles for behavior management in the classroom leads to a better social and emotional climate, reduces violence, and increases students' well-being, sense of protection and belonging, and classroom skills. The intervention program and its outcomes form the basis for a general model of classroom management, discipline management, and behavior management. Because there are clear principles guided by defined goals, phases, and tools, this model can be applied to other environments and needs in terms of environmental management, goals, and objectives for review, accuracy, and optimization.

Keywords: classroom management, discipline management, self regulation, cognitive behavioral intervention, behavior

JEL classification: O03, I01, I03, Z01

1. Introduction

Managing discipline in the classroom refers to the ability to positively control student behavior and allows for the creation of a learning community (Valente et al., 2019).

According to Franklin & Harrington (2019), the classroom is a shared learning space where knowledge and functions are formed to help students shape their futures. The responsibility for a positive and formative experience with positive outcomes is shared between the teacher and the students. A positive learning experience in the classroom requires a balance between a variety of student needs and environmental factors. It requires the co-creation of a learning environment characterized by respect, empathy, trust, and interest. Effective behavior management strategies contribute to a positive classroom climate. They strike a balance between applying laws and rules and maintaining curiosity and inquisitiveness.

Effective classroom management is characterized by the consistent application of classroom procedures and routines that provide clarity about behavioral expectations. Consistency creates order and helps build trust. Active student participation in pedagogical processes as part of a management strategy contributes to positive classroom behavior (Freiberg et al., 2019). Effective management reduces stress, regulates behavior, and enhances students' sense of belonging, competence, and legitimacy (Valente et al., 2019).

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Management skills that focus on classroom behavior have been divided into proactive and reactive skills. Proactive skills include designing a program that provides a meaningful and tailored learning experience that allows the student to participate. Integrating direction and focus into learning processes helps increase student persistence in terms of concentration, focus, and participation (Nagro, Fraser & Hooks, 2019). Adjusting teaching and learning processes to the pace of the class. Implementing monitoring and reflective processes while understanding the causes and circumstances of student behavior and consistently using reinforcers to influence behavior, achievement, engagement, and success (Malik, 2020).

Reactive strategies are less effective in managing behavior (Malik, 2020) and yet it is a necessary skill to manage discipline in the classroom to correct disruptive behaviors and prevent escalation (Mielke & Farrington, 2021). Reactive action involves the use of consistency (Wang et al., 2020), immediacy and purposefulness in response, and establishment as an expected response to create awareness, order, and a link between behavior and response (Freiberg, Oviatt & Naveira, 2020)

Behavior problems and disorders are terms that group together problematic or disruptive behavior, defiant, oppositional behavior, antisocial disorders, and conduct disorders. Conduct disorders refer to the violation of social rules and negative actions toward others such as aggressiveness, lying, and stealing (Goldstein et al., 2023). From studies conducted over the years, a high percentage of elementary school children are at high risk of developing a conduct problem during their school years (Olivier et al., 2020). Behavior problems among students in the classroom can arise for a variety of reasons. Some are related to environmental factors, others to factors related to the individual. They can be influenced by developmental background, various types of learning disabilities, emotional state, difficulty driving, sense of competence, sense of belonging, educational challenges, mismatch of learning with the student's talents, and other external and internal factors (WHO, 2019). Studies have shown that how the classroom is managed and how discipline is handled in the classroom has a significant impact on classroom climate, behavior, and educational outcomes (Valente et al., 2019).

Cognitive-behavioral intervention is based on an approach that includes cognitive and behavioral components and aims to change individual behavior. It utilizes basic cognitive processes that are responsible for successful problem-solving processes. Studies have shown that this type of intervention is able to improve self-monitoring mechanisms and thus social problem-solving skills in a variety of situations and structures. Therefore, this type of intervention helps reduce the risk of developing behavior problems (McDaniel et al, 2023).

The complexity of treating behavior problems, their negative effects, and the importance of effective and adaptive developmental outcomes underscore the importance of studying and developing tools and responses to this complex issue.

1.1 Behavior problems in the classroom

Emotional and behavioral problems (EBP) or disorders (EBD) include any behavioral patterns that are abnormal compared to the norm and developmental level. They can be classified as either "internalizing" or "externalizing". Externalizing behavior problems and disorders are manifested in the violation of social rules and negative actions toward others (Fossum et al., 2021).

Violence is an extroverted behavior characterized by the exertion of an unpleasant stimulus, physical or verbal, toward the other. Studies distinguish three types of violent behavior: reactive violence, which can result from activating events that cause the individual to behave violently. Instrumental violence, which helps the individual to satisfy his needs when he is unable to achieve his goal in an acceptable way; and violence for its own sake, which arises from severe emotional problems that are sometimes a consequence of the environment (Eliram, 1982). Another distinction is between violence that results in physical harm and violence that results in psychological harm. This type of division focuses on the secret motives that cause the violent act (Marom et al., 2011). This categorization led to examining violence at the level of its underlying factors as well. In the literature based on frustration-anxiety theory, violence is divided into reactive and proactive violence. Reactive violence occurs in response to violence that causes anger and frustration, and aims to reduce the level of anger and frustration by hitting the perpetrator. This type of violence has a more positive prognosis than initiated violence (Ibid.).

Initiated violence is based on past experiences. The individual has learned that a violent response will help him or her achieve various goals and is therefore activated whenever the individual wants to achieve his or her goals. Other subdivisions refer to the differences between the behaviors that characterize

violence, distinguishing between direct violence and indirect violence, and between verbal violence and physical violence (Ronen et al., 2007).

1.2 Patterns of victimization during the elementary school years

Victimization is a common stressor in school-aged children and can affect the child's future development. Children who suffer from persistent bullying and an unprotected social-emotional climate (Mandira et al., 2020) are at increased risk of developing psychological and behavioral adjustment problems such as loneliness, low self-esteem, anxiety, depression, externalizing problems, and school dropout (D'Urso & Symonds, 2021). Violent behavior is not only harmful to the environment of the violent child, but also to the development and functioning of the violent child, who is at risk of social rejection, dropping out of school, and developing criminal behaviors (Ferrara et al., 2019).

An association has been found between an early victimization experience during the elementary school years and the continuation of the pattern of bullying victimization in later years (Wu et al., 2023). The early years of elementary school are a significant and important time to observe the child's developmental process and understand why certain children are victimized and others are not, and how the change in victimization patterns is related to their behavior and its context over time.

As the child progresses through the developmental stages of acquiring complex cognitive skills, patterns of violence decrease. It is likely that there is a relationship between these two processes (Gaffney et al., 2021).

Cognitive skills are related to mechanisms of self-control, information processing, and emotion control. These mechanisms enable individuals to control and regulate their behavior and moderate the relationship between sensitivity and aggression (Mitsea, et al., 2021). Violence control and behavior regulation become possible for a child as he or she acquires tools and skills that enable him or her to behave socially.

The development of self-control skills enables the child to activate mechanisms of observation, monitoring, and self-reinforcement, to use accepted social models, and to control his or her behavior (Marom et al., 2011).

1.3 Cognitive-behavioral theory - development, perception and intervention

The classical "cognitive-behavioral" model was developed in recognition of the interrelationships between cognition and behavior, as well as the emotional state and general functioning of the organism, and assumes a connection between the way individuals perceive events in their lives and their feelings, physiological reactions, and behavior. According to this concept, a person's feelings and behavior are influenced by the interpretation he or she gives to the events in his or her life, rather than by the events themselves (Beck, 2014). Cognitive-behavioral intervention methods use strategies aimed at bringing about change in thinking, feelings, and behavior (Kendall, 2012). Their foundation is the individual's belief system, behavioral strategies, and understanding of the beliefs and behaviors that characterize them. A cognitive-behavioral intervention program addresses the acquisition and establishment of a cognitive change in the thinking and belief system to achieve stable emotional and behavioral change (Beck, 2014). It relies on an approach that includes cognitive and behavioral components to change individual behavior through its influence on the basic cognitive processes responsible for successful problem-solving processes and to improve self-monitoring mechanisms. It affects social problem-solving skills in a variety of situations and structures. Therefore, this type of intervention helps reduce the risk of developing behavior problems, contributes to positive social functioning, and promotes a visible and hidden impact on individual development (McDaniel et al, 2023).

One of the most important issues in child care is the issue of cognitive processing and the distinction between "cognitive impairment" and "cognitive bias" Processing impairment is caused by a lack of attention to information and a lack of foresight that affects behavior and its outcomes. Cognitive distortion refers to a disorder of thought processes (Kendall, 2012).

Impulsive behavior results from cognitive impairment, which manifests itself in the inability to let thinking precede action, as opposed to cognitive distortion, which indicates active but distorted processing (Kendall, 2012).

The self-regulatory system is at the heart of any daily process. Its components mediate the influence of the external environment on individuals and provide them with the basis for purposeful action. Consistent, reliable, and frequent self-observation leads the individual to success in self-regulation.

A child's self-regulation skills can influence his or her adjustment to the school environment in which he must function independently and without dependence on the presence of his or her primary caregivers (Wellington, 2022).

2. Methods

The purpose of this study was to examine the effects of classroom discipline management using a cognitive behavioral intervention program on students' acquisition of self-management and self-regulation skills, the extent of behavior problems in the classroom, and the social and academic emotional climate in the classroom.

The sample consisted of thirty 4th grade students in an elementary school in Israel. The vast majority of the children in the class have been learning together for about five years, i.e., since pre-compulsory kindergarten. Of them, 8 are girls and 22 are boys, aged 9-10, living in Jerusalem or surrounding areas. 16 of the children in the class were diagnosed with learning disabilities or ADHD, and 14 of the children were not diagnosed (Table 1).

Table 1. Study Population – children

	N	%	Mean
Gender			
• Girl	8	26.66	
• Boy	22	73.33	
Age			9.4
Origin			
• Abroad	2	6.66	
• Israel	28	93.33	
Place			
• Jerusalem	24	80	
• Outside Jerusalem	6	20	
Diagnosis			
• Adhd	9	30	
• learning Disability	7	23.3	
• undiagnosed	14	46.7	

Source: own processing (2023)

Research tools: In-depth interviews: semi-structured in-depth interviews to capture staff feelings about the class before and after the intervention program.

open-ended face-to-face interviews were conducted on predetermined general topics to understand students' feelings and needs.

Participant observation: participant observation was conducted in the classroom to directly and personally intervene in the lives and processes of the students and to experience the reality of the classroom together with them. The Observations focused on events that occurred during common class time related to self-management and self-regulation, as well as the general atmosphere in the classroom during class time and extracurricular activities. In addition, classroom discussions were recorded to monitor the program and its outcomes.

Open-ended questionnaires: Twice a year, open-ended questionnaires were distributed before the end of each semester regarding students' experiences in the classroom

The intervention included the use of cognitive and behavioral tools. The goal was to teach strategies and tools to strengthen and develop self-reflection, self-management, and self-regulation in the first phase.

In the second phase, goals were established to support classroom discipline in creating a positive social and emotional classroom climate and to manage student behavior.

At the same time, the process of introducing and acquiring tools and semantics continued.

The program was created and implemented using a variety of tools:

Tools to assimilate behavioral routines: as the school year began, the schedules, lesson system, and accompanying lessons were created in the spirit of the intervention plan to create a unified and consistent language and a sense of framework and safety.

Permanent Lessons: Three permanent weekly lessons were incorporated into the system to learn and use program language, role play, learn tools and strategies, learn through stories, practice social discourse, practice reflection skills, reflect, and create daily report pages.

Monitoring Boards: behavior boards were created and posted in the classroom to provide consistent, orderly, and engaging monitoring of the behavior process.

Self-management board: a self-management board was created based on the cognitive behavioral model derived from the emotional-rational method. The board is divided into quarters to distinguish between an event, a thought, an emotion/feeling, and a reaction.

In applying the model, a specific work routine was established (Figure 1).

Reaction stages: An axis for reaction stages was placed under the circle to practice observing behaviors and reactions (Figure 2).

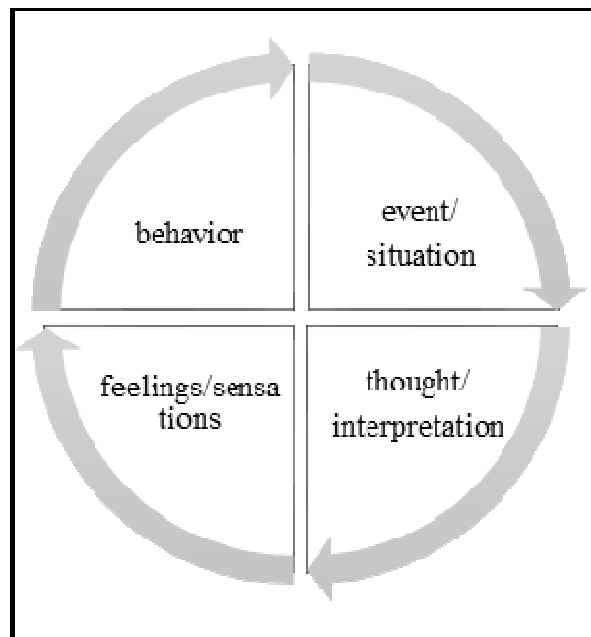


Figure 1. Self management wheel
Based on Albert Ellis (1957), in (Beck, 2014)

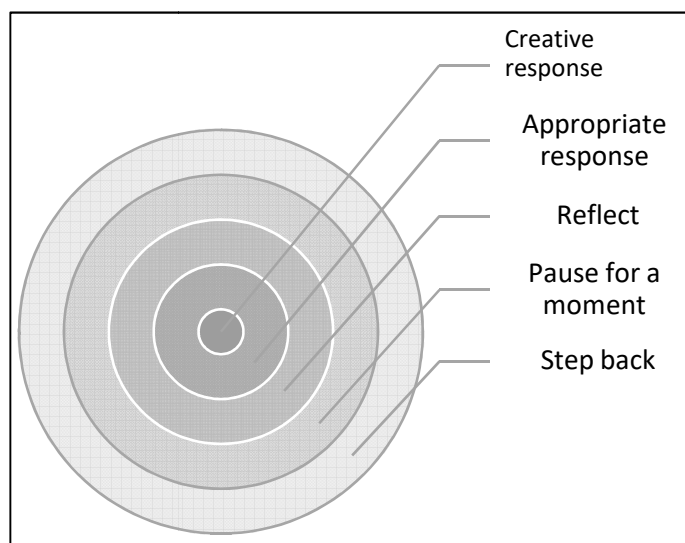


Figure 2. reaction stages
Source: Fuchs (2023)

3. Results

The results obtained combine data that indicate qualitative processes that indicate a change in perceptions and experiences as a result of the discipline and behavior management program. Measurable data indicate a reduction in maladaptive behaviors and an improvement in adaptive behaviors in the classroom.

Analysis of the results of the social climate:

The results describe a comparison between the responses on the reflection questionnaires completed by the children at the end of third grade before the intervention program and at the end of fourth grade after the program.

The questionnaires completed by the children contained closed and open-ended questions. The closed questions were rated on a scale of 1-5: 1 - never, 3 - sometimes, 5 - always, 2,4 - intermediate situations between always and sometimes or between sometimes and never.

The results describe a comparison between responses on reflection questionnaires completed by children at the end of third grade before the intervention program and at the end of fourth grade after the program (Table 2).

Table 2. reflection sheets comparison

statment	Mean - Before	Mean – After
"I choose my friends by myself"	1.76	4.33
"My friends respect me and my opinions"	2.63	4.43
"I manage to avoid conflicts and arguments with friends and reach a solution in pleasant ways"	1.53	4.36

Source: own processing (2023)

In relation to the proverb "I choose my friends by myself"

Numerical results: 70% of the students were found to have a numerical increase in the legitimacy and ability to choose their friends, 30% were ranked in the highest scoring group at the beginning of the program and the score was maintained. 60% of children rated the statement with the highest score at the end of the year compared to 30% at the beginning of the year.

Verbatim Results: At the beginning of the year, 70% of subjects reported some difficulty finding a friend they would like to play with. At the end of the year, all children said their social status in the classroom had improved. 40% of the children reported a personal process they went through regarding their personal responsibility in choosing friendships.

In relation to the statement, "My friends respect me and my opinions."

Numerical Results: A numerical increase in the feeling of being respected was observed in 80% of the subjects, no change was observed in the remaining 20%, while in 10% of them the statement was rated with the highest score from the beginning and in another 10% there was no improvement in the feeling of being respected in the class. 60% of subjects rated the statement with the highest score at the end of the year, compared to 10% at the beginning of the year.

Verbatim results: At the beginning of the year, 80% of subjects were dissatisfied with the level of respect they received from their classmates, and 10% said they did not know how to refer to a verb. At the end of the year, 80% of subjects reported feeling a change in the overall class climate. 10% indicated that their feeling in class was not good.

In reference to the saying "I manage to avoid quarrels and arguments with friends and find a solution in a pleasant way".

Numerical results 50% of the subjects observed a numerical increase in the feeling that they manage to behave better in conflict situations. No change in outcome was observed in the remaining 50%. 60% of the subjects rated the statement at the maximum score at the end of the year, compared to 10% at the beginning of the year. No decrease in score was observed in any of the subjects.

Verbatim results: At the beginning of the year, 50% of subjects said they did not need conflict management tools. 30% saw no personal responsibility for their involvement in fights. 30% referred to their personal responsibility. 20% said they had tools to help them solve problems. 10% referred to their general feeling about classroom interactions and communication. At the end of the year, all subjects reported improvement in dealing with conflict. 70% of subjects said they purchased tools to help them

manage conflict and solve problems. 30% of subjects were positive about the process and the general atmosphere in the class and said they had expanded their social circles.

The next question asked students to say what they would keep in the class and what they would improve in it. The question included only a verbal description without a numerical representation. At the beginning of the year, 90% of the subjects felt that there was something to improve in the class socially. 60% of them experienced the class as an unsafe place and reported bullying towards them or their classmates. 10% reported feeling disrespected. 20% reported that they would like to expand their social circles and opportunities to play with friends.

20% reported that noise and anger affect the atmosphere. 10% said they did not know what they would like to improve. 10% said they would like to improve everything in the classroom. At the end of the year, 30% felt there was nothing left to improve. 10% felt everything should be improved and 60% mentioned specific changes that should be made. Compared to the beginning of the year, only 10% said that the children's attitude towards each other should be improved.

As for what students wanted to keep in the classroom: At the beginning of the year, 70% of subjects wrote that they would keep their best friends. 30% did not find anything on the social level in the classroom that they would like to keep. At the end of the year, 70% of the children referred to the flow in the class and the general social climate, 40% of the subjects described the improvement of the children's behavior towards each other. 20% of the subjects the presence and effectiveness of the acquired tools for self-management and problem solving. 30% mentioned the good atmosphere and pleasant feeling in the class. 75% of the 30% who did not find what they wanted to preserve at the beginning of the year found things they would preserve.

At the level of the defined goal of social climate and social communication, there was a significant improvement in the children's feeling about their social status and an increase in their overall good feeling in the classroom. 20% reported that noise and riots affected the atmosphere. 10% said they did not know what they would like to improve. 10% said they would like to improve everything in the classroom. At the end of the year, 30% felt there was nothing left to improve. 10% felt everything should be improved and 60% mentioned specific changes that should be made. Compared to the beginning of the year, only 10% said that the children's attitude towards each other should be improved.

Results of a circle for self-management, guided discovery, and mantras:

Results describe a comparison between content brought up during observations, conversations with children, and class discussions at the end of third grade before the intervention program and at the end of fourth grade after the program.

At the level of the defined goal of habituation and internalization and application of the principles of the program and the reference tables At the end of the year, most children had acquired the circle of self-management and the tools for observation, internalized the stages at the cognitive level and the emotional level, and used them to achieve defined behavioral goals, such as: social climate, rules of discourse, social play.

At the level of defined goal of rules of discourse: significant improvement was observed in the ability to engage in attentive, appropriate, and respectful classroom discourse.

At the level of the defined goal of a social game, the intervention helped in acquiring tools to manage a social game.

Results of the reaction phases: according to the students' reports, using the reaction stages as an available, practical, and clear tool helped them avoid impulsive and violent behavior. At the beginning of the year, 51.7% of the children reported that they were victims of verbal violence expressed in humiliation, insults, threats, social ostracism and boycott, compared to 17.24% at the end of the year. At the beginning of the year, 24.13% of students reported having suffered physical violence, compared to 10% at the end of the year. At the beginning of the year, the percentage of children who required repeated treatment and activation of personal programs due to violent behavior was 30%, compared to 6% at the end of the year (Table 3).

Table 3. violent and victims compression

	Percent – before	Percent – after
Violent behavior (physical or verbal)	31%	6%
victims of physical violence	24.13%	10%
victims of verbal violence	51.7%	17.24%

Source: own processing (2023)

4. Discussion

The intervention program primarily required clear classroom management, which included classroom organization, i.e., creating the weekly and daily schedule and establishing regularities and routines in the classroom. The organized and orderly environment structure that created by the intervention program was important and central element in building a framework that facilitates productive learning academically and socially (Allen, 2010).

Studies have shown that there is a clear correlation between classroom management, the establishment of clear and consistent rules and expectations, and an infrastructure that allows for student participation in decision making, and a decrease in violence and bullying (WHO, 2019). It can be concluded that maintaining an organized and orderly work environment has helped to improve classroom climate, which is reflected in the improvement of how students feel in the classroom by making more connections to learning and having a sense of security. The uniqueness of the study is reflected in the fact that the behavioral problem was included as a major theme in the classroom management objective and that a cognitive-behavioral intervention program was activated in a school setting with a large group of thirty students. The reflective and metacognitive work affected automatic responses and the system of beliefs and perceptions. It also helped students discover for themselves for the first time skills and potentials in several areas, including mastering appropriate social discourse and finding a place in the social group. The goal of the intervention program was to develop self-management skills in students through cognitive and behavioral tools to improve class management and classroom climate. The intervention program led to an improvement in the students' self regulation and self-monitoring skills. It expanded their awareness and personal responsibility. The results of the intervention illustrate the importance of classroom and discipline management for effective problem solving skills. Changing thinking, learning and monitoring skills lead to development and implementation of an independent self-management system and learning new behaviors.

The results of the study show the importance of classroom management and how through a slow and structured process, through small successes and reinforcements, self-management skills were acquired by the students. The requirement to reflect daily helped internalize and process reflective observation as a tool to examine thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. The process of internalization and establishment involved regular instructional sessions in which automatic thoughts, belief systems, perceptions, and resulting cognitive patterns, feelings, and emotions and their effects on behavior were made conscious. Research findings suggest that students were able to moderate their feelings of anger and consequently their behavior by focusing on classroom reflection and changing their automatic thoughts.

Conclusion

The purpose of the study was to examine the relationship between a program combining cognitive and behavioral classroom management principles and tools and students' self-management skills and behavior. The study also examined the relationship between working on self-management skills and improving classroom climate, reducing behavioral difficulties, and increasing students' sense of safety and involvement. Findings suggest that purposeful classroom management based on structure, clarity, stability, and consistency supports the development and acquisition of self-control, self-regulation, and self-management skills. Skills that influence individual behavior and facilitate positive, effective, and productive group behavior. The study was conducted over one year with a group of students. It did not include a control group to examine the effectiveness of another program or the natural developmental processes of adolescence without the implementation of a program. The study proposed an intervention model to manage group behavior by improving individual self-management skills.

In order to use this model as a management model in different settings and institutions, it needs to be tested on different types of groups, needs, ages, and goals.

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